

Calendar No. 325

112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 379

Condemning violence by the Government of Syria against the Syrian people.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 16, 2012

Mr. KERRY, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, reported the following original resolution; which was placed on the calendar

RESOLUTION

Condemning violence by the Government of Syria against
the Syrian people.

Whereas the Syrian Arab Republic is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), adopted at New York December 16, 1966, the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, done at New York December 10, 1984;

Whereas Syria voted in favor of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted at Paris, December 10, 1948;

Whereas, in March 2011, peaceful demonstrations in Syria began against the authoritarian rule of Bashar al-Assad;

Whereas, in response to the demonstrations, the Government of Syria launched a brutal crackdown, which has resulted in gross human rights violations, use of force against civilians, torture, extrajudicial killings, arbitrary executions, sexual violence, and interference with access to medical treatment;

Whereas the United Nations, as of January 25, 2012, estimated that more than 5,400 people in Syria have been killed since the violence began in March 2011;

Whereas, on February 4, 2012, President Barack Obama stated that President Bashar al-Assad “has no right to lead Syria, and has lost all legitimacy with his people and the international community”;

Whereas the Department of State has repeatedly condemned the Government of Syria’s crackdown on its people, including on January 30, 2012, when Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated “The status quo is unsustainable. . .The longer the Assad regime continues its attacks on the Syrian people and stands in the way of a peaceful transition, the greater the concern that instability will escalate and spill over throughout the region.”;

Whereas President Obama, on April 29, 2011, designated 3 individuals subject to sanctions for human rights abuses in Syria: Maher al-Assad, the brother of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and brigade commander in the Syrian Army’s 4th Armored Division; Atif Najib, the former head of the Political Security Directorate for Daraa Province and a cousin of Bashar al-Assad; and Ali Mamluk, director of Syria’s General Intelligence Directorate;

Whereas, on May 18, 2011, President Obama issued an executive order sanctioning senior officials of the Syrian Arab Republic and their supporters, specifically designating 7 people: President Bashar al-Assad, Vice President Farouk al-Shara, Prime Minister Adel Safar, Minister of the Interior Mohammad Ibrahim al-Shaar, Minister of Defense Ali Habib Mahmoud, Head of Syrian Military Intelligence Abdul Fatah Qudsiya, and Director of Political Security Directorate Mohammed Dib Zaitoun;

Whereas President Obama, on August 17, 2011, issued Executive Order 13582, blocking property of the Government of Syria and prohibiting certain transactions with respect to Syria;

Whereas, on December 1, 2011, the Department of the Treasury designated 2 individuals, Aus Aslan and Muhammad Makhluf, under Executive Order 13573 and 2 entities, the Military Housing Establishment and the Real Estate Bank of Syria, under Executive Order 13582;

Whereas, on May 6, 2011, the European Union's 27 countries imposed sanctions on the Government of Syria for the human rights abuses, including asset freezes and visa bans on members of the Government of Syria and an arms embargo on the country;

Whereas, on November 12, 2011, the League of Arab States voted to suspend Syria's membership in the organization;

Whereas, on December 2, 2011, the United Nations Human Rights Council passed Resolution S-18/1, which deplores the human rights situation in Syria, commends the League of Arab States, and supports implementation of its Plan of Action;

Whereas the League of Arab States approved and implemented a plan of action to send a team of international monitors to Syria, which began December 26, 2011;

Whereas, on January 28, 2012, the League of Arab States decided to suspend its international monitoring mission due to escalating violence within Syria;

Whereas, on February 4, 2012, the Russian Federation and People's Republic of China vetoed a United Nations Security Council Resolution in support of the League of Arab States' Plan of Action;

Whereas, on February 14, 2012, General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testified before the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate that Syria "is a much different situation than we collectively saw in Libya," presenting a "very different challenge" in which "we also know that other regional actors are providing support" as a part of a "Sunni majority rebelling against an oppressive Alawite-Shia regime";

Whereas the Governments of the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran remain major suppliers of military equipment to the Government of Syria notwithstanding that government's violent repression of demonstrators;

Whereas the gross human rights violations perpetuated by the Government of Syria against the people of Syria represent a grave risk to regional peace and stability; and

Whereas the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate will immediately schedule a hearing to take place as soon as the Senate reconvenes to assess the situation in Syria and all the international options available to address this crisis: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) strongly condemns the Government of Syr-
3 ia’s brutal and unjustifiable use of force against ci-
4 vilians, including unarmed women and children and
5 its violations of the fundamental human rights and
6 dignity of the people of Syria;

7 (2) expresses its solidarity with the people of
8 Syria, who have exhibited remarkable courage and
9 determination in the face of unspeakable violence to
10 rid themselves of a brutal dictatorship;

11 (3) expresses strong disappointment with the
12 Governments of the Russian Federation and the
13 People’s Republic of China for their veto of the
14 United Nations Security Council resolution con-
15 demning Bashar al-Assad and the violence in Syria
16 and urges them to reconsider their votes;

17 (4) encourages the members of the United Na-
18 tions Security Council to continue to pursue a reso-
19 lution in support of a political solution to the crisis
20 in Syria;

21 (5) commends the League of Arab States’ ef-
22 forts to bring about a peaceful resolution in Syria;

23 (6) regrets that the League of Arab States ob-
24 server mission was not able to monitor the full im-
25 plementation of the League of Arab States’ Action

1 Plan of November 2, 2011, due to the escalating vio-
2 lence in Syria; and
3 (7) urges the international community to review
4 legal processes available to hold officials of the Gov-
5 ernment of Syria accountable for crimes against hu-
6 manity and gross violations of human rights.

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